

MINUTES
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

LANSING CENTER
333 E. MICHIGAN
LANSING

MAY 4, 2006

PRESENT FOR THE COMMISSION

Keith Charters, Chair
Mary Brown
Darnell Earley
Bob Garner, Vice-Chair
John Madigan
Frank Wheatlake

ABSENT FOR THE COMMISSION

Jerry Hall

PRESENT FOR STAFF

Becky Humphries, Director
Mindy Koch, Resource Management Deputy
Dennis Fox, Chief of Staff
Other DNR Staff

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Chairman Charters called the Committee of the Whole meeting of the NRC to order at 3:10 p.m. on Thursday, May 4, 2005.

DIRECTOR'S AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Director Humphries presented Director's Awards to the Parks and Recreation Marketing Innovations Team.

With the support of Parks and Recreation Division Chief Ron Olson, the Parks and Recreation Marketing Innovations Team was formed in April 2005. From the first meeting, the team rose to the challenge of getting staff energized to increase awareness and use at our state parks and recreation areas. Most of the work completed by these individuals was in addition to their regular workload. In one short year, following is just a small sampling of what this team has accomplished:

- It became a standing Parks and Recreation Division committee with support from the Citizens Committee for Michigan State Parks and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Office of Communications;
- The team developed and published a "Special Events Planning Guide" and "Cool Event Ideas from A to Z."
- It created a Holiday Motor Vehicle Permit sales campaign with radio advertising for selected west Michigan audiences;
- Thanks to the team, the first-ever DNR e-newsletter will begin in June, targeting parks and recreation area visitors, especially young adults in their 20s, to heighten their awareness of the diverse recreation opportunities available;
- In July 2005, the team developed and organized Project GO – Get Outdoors, which was hugely successful. In February and this coming June, Project GO will be connected to the DNR's Free Fishing Weekend, celebrating Michigan's wonderful natural resources.

This team has led the way in helping the division become more entrepreneurial and in addressing the challenge of shrinking revenues and a declining user base.

Team members who could not attend were:

Tim Bauer, Supervisor of Hayes State Park
David Miller, Manager of Sterling State Park and Tri-Centennial State Park
Rob Strittmatter, newly-named supervisor of Bewabic State Park
Monica Terrell, the Division's Volunteer Program Manager.

Team Members present were:

Doug Barry, Supervisor at Van Riper State Park
Louise Cotter, Secretary at Cheboygan Field Office
Mary Dettloff, DNR Public Information Officer in the Office of Communications
Natalie Elkins, Parks and Recreation Training Officer in Lansing
Betsy Kish, Supervisor at Port Crescent State Park
Dan Lord, Parks and Recreation Planner and ADA Coordinator
Kelly Mathes, Accounting Assistant at Baraga State Park
Sandy Richardson, Communications Assistant at Porcupine Mountains
Wilderness State Park
Colleen Steinman, Parks and Recreation Public Relations and Marketing
Coordinator
Anna Sylvester, Roscommon District Supervisor

Director Humphries applauded the Team's ongoing efforts and complimented them on their commitment to the promotion of outdoor recreation activities and dedication to the DNR.

Legislative Update

Rodney Stokes, DNR Legislative Liaison, presented an update on pending legislation.

Washington DC Report

Director Humphries highlighted the legal/legislative report written by Carol Bambery. She noted that she had chaired the Midwest Regional working group of the Fish and Wildlife Health Initiative, held in Wisconsin. This group is engaging fish and wildlife, agriculture and public health officials in maturing the national initiative. More meetings of that group will be held across the United States.

Kellogg Foundation Partnership

Ron Olson, Chief, Parks and Recreation Division, reported that the Midwest Communication Foundation Ventures (JCFV) will provide grants to the DNR totaling \$3 million (\$2 million for Parks and Recreation Development projects and \$1 million matching grant funding). In return, the DNR will fund "Access to Recreation" projects at state parks and recreation areas throughout Michigan and leverage DNR administered grant funds to assist local units of government. The partnership includes: the DNR, the Kellogg Foundation, the Midwest Communication Foundation Ventures, and the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association. The DNR's role in the partnership has three main components: 1) facility accessibility improvements at state park and recreation areas; 2) community involvement and education; and 3) leveraging DNR grant programs. The creative partnerships provide the funding so one day, everyone, regardless of ability, can enjoy Michigan's great outdoors. **Mr. Olson** said the DNR is excited about the partnership.

General RV Center Partnership

Ron Olson also reported that the DNR is partnering with General RV Center in Brighton, Michigan. General RV Center purchased 250 annual Motor Vehicle Permits (MVPs) totaling \$6000 and will provide them with each recreational vehicle they sell.

Project Go-Get Outdoors And Free Fishing Weekend

Ron Olson reported that on June 10-11, the second annual Project GO weekend will be held. This will be coupled with Free Fishing Weekend.

Michigan Mercury Rules Workgroup

Mindy Koch reported that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued the federal Clean Air Mercury Rule (CAMR) requirements. Subsequently, Governor Granholm directed that Michigan pursue a rule to reduce mercury emissions from coal-fired electric utilities by 90 percent by 2015. The Michigan Mercury Rules Workgroup was established to develop rules for Michigan that comply with the federal Clean Air Mercury Rule. Mercury contamination affects the fisheries of the state through its inland lakes. The NRC supports this effort.

ORV Issue

Mindy Koch reported that counties in Michigan are interested in opening up county road right-of-ways for Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) use. Representative Joel Sheltrown asked the Office of the Attorney General to opine on the issue. **Jim Riley, Assistant Attorney General**, said the Attorney General opinion was that, generally, ORVs are not allowed on rights-of-way except where seeking access to DNR trails and that it is not appropriate, under statute, to utilize county roads for trail access. **Mindy Koch** said that counties will need to be notified and said the DNR does not support utilizing county roads for purposes of ORV trail access. One concern is that, if an ORV is utilizing a county road and there is an accident, the ORV will be automatically at fault and will be deemed negligent.

Budget Update

Sharon Schafer, Chief, Budget and Support Services, reviewed the Fiscal Year 2007 Budget and Supplemental. She presented the version as passed by the House Appropriations Subcommittee. This Bill in some form, will be acted upon by the House Appropriations Committee in the next few weeks. A supplemental bill for Fiscal Year 2006 has been returned to the House. More information will be forthcoming as they move through the process.

Deer Management Work Shop

The next Deer Management Work Shop will be held on May 13, 2006 at 9:30 a.m. at the Big Rapids Holiday Inn.

Personnel Announcements

David Freed, Chief, Office of Land and Facilities, introduced Ed Meadows who will replace Bob Couvreur, as section manager for Real Estate Services.

Commissioner Garner introduced Tony Hansen, the new Editor of Michigan Out-of-Doors Magazine. Tony replaced Dennis Knickerbocker, who recently retired.

Director Humphries announced that Stevens, assistant to the Forest, Mineral and Fire Management Chief, passed away. Wanda had been employed with the Department of Natural Resources for 25 years and the State of Michigan for 34 years. She had suffered a brief illness.

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The Committee of the Whole meeting adjourned at 4:21 p.m.

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The Regular meeting of the Natural Resources Commission convened at 4:35 p.m.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES

Chuck DeLeeuw, Michigan Traditional Bowhunters
Ron Easterly, Houghton Lake
Jerry Keck, Michigan Bowhunters Association
Matt Kiilunen, Chassel
Bob McCreavy, Nester Township, Roscommon County
Ellen Nitz, Citizens for a Quiet Community
John Ormsby, Cheboygan County
Dan Potter, Michigan State Chapter, Michigan Wild Turkey Federation
Jenness Weigand, Citizens for a Quiet Community

Matt Kiilunen, Chassel believes there is a liability issue with those who use coniber traps because of the hazard to dogs and other non-targeted animals. He asked that requirements be set to make traps dog-proof.

Chuck DeLeeuw, Michigan Traditional Bowhunters, wants deer management units (DMUs) in the northern Lower Peninsula (LP) and the Upper Peninsula (UP) to be based on land ownership patterns and habitat versus county lines; requested that all antlerless permits on public and private land in the northern LP and UP be issued by a drawing as opposed to over-the-counter; and supported the proposed 40 acres minimum for private land antlerless permits in northern LP and UP. He noted that the Michigan Traditional Bowhunters would support tagging button bucks with buck tags but does not believe it is a high priority issue at this time. Discussion ensued relative to change DMUs to a land ownership basis.

John Ormsby, Cheboygan County, believes the NRC and DNR are heading in the right direction relative to deer issues.

Bob McCreavy, Nester Township, Roscommon County, appreciates the information he is receiving on deer populations and is looking forward to decisions that will be made on deer.

Ron Easterly, Prudenville, is disgruntled with clear cutting occurring in his area and stated that in those areas, there is no deer habitat. **Commissioner Garner** asked that he provide a list of those areas so he could possibly visit them.

Jenness Weigand, Citizens for a Quiet Community, requested relief from the shooting noise at Island Lake Shooting Range.

Ellen Nitz, Citizens for a Quiet Community, requested relief from the shooting noise at Island Lake Shooting Range to allow citizens to better enjoy the surrounding park.

Jerry Keck, Michigan Bowhunters Association, supports the proposed bear hunting regulations for the UP. **Commissioner Garner** asked Mr. Keck if their membership would be opposed to transferring bear licenses to youth or individuals with life-ending illnesses who had not applied for a license. **Mr. Keck** responded no.

Dan Potter, recent past president, Michigan Chapter, Michigan Wild Turkey Federation, presented the 2006 Wild Turkey Management Cooperator patch. The patch design is chosen from a contest of drawings entered by K-12 students. The contest winner received \$100. The program is a partnership between the DNR and the Federation. **Mr. Potter** noted that the Federation is working on the dove ballot issue. **Chairman Charters** thanked the Federation for their support on important DNR related issues.

Chairman Charters noted that several letters had been received from the Michigan United Deer Hunter's membership relative to low deer numbers in the UP and northern LP.

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Chairman Charters adjourned the Public Appearances portion of the meeting and immediately convened the Regular Meeting of the NRC at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 6, 2006 NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION MEETING

Commissioner Garner made a motion, supported by **Commissioner Earley**, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

BLACK BEAR QUOTAS, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER, AMENDMENT NO. 1

Commissioner Garner made a motion, supported by Commissioner Madigan, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

AVAILABILITY OF ANTLERLESS LICENSES, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER, AMENDMENT NO. 2 OF 2006

Commissioner Garner made a motion, supported by Commissioner Brown, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

MUTE SWAN NUISANCE CONTROL REGULATIONS, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER, AMENDMENT NO. 4 OF 2006

Commissioner Wheatlake made a motion, supported by Commissioner Madigan, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

2006 FALL WILD TURKEY SEASON DATES AND LICENSE QUOTAS, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER, AMENDMENT NO. 5 OF 2006

Commissioner Garner made a motion, supported by Commissioner Madigan, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

ELK SEASON DATES AND HUNT UNIT BOUNDARIES, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER, AMENDMENT NO. 6 OF 2006

Commissioner Garner made a motion, supported by Commissioner Brown, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS, WILDLIFE CONSERVATION ORDER, AMENDMENT NO. 7 OF 2006

Commissioner Madigan made a motion, supported by Commissioner Earley, for approval. Motion unanimously carried.

DIRECTOR'S ACTION ITEMS

Director Humphries stated her intent to sign all of the Director's Action Items on the Agenda. Commissioners commended staff for the land transactions on the Agenda for approval.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Hunting and Fishing License Package Development Work Group

Commissioner Wheatlake (Work Group Chair) reported that a meeting was held on April 10. The next meeting is scheduled for May 8. Following that meeting, the Work Group will recess for the summer and reconvene in the fall.

NRC Policy Committee On Wildlife and Fisheries

Commissioner Garner, Committee Chair, reported that an NRC Policy Committee on Wildlife and Fisheries meeting was held on May 4, 2006 at 1:00 p.m. at the Lansing Center. **Commissioners Garner and Madigan** were present for the Committee. **Commissioners Charters, Brown, and Wheatlake** were also present. **Wildlife Division Chief Bill Moritz** announced that **Doug Reeves** was appointed to the position of Assistant Wildlife Division Chief.

Dave Bostick, Wildlife Division, presented Furbearer regulation recommendations. The Department recommended that the NRC require free kill tags for otter, fisher, and marten. This would be similar to the current bobcat kill tag and would help improve harvest and effort information and improve enforcement in the field. The marten kill tag would replace required trapping permit. The Department also recommended having kill tag age restrictions. Individuals under the age of 8 would not be able to obtain kill tags for bobcat, otter, fisher and marten. This is intended to address enforcement issues involving registration of otter, bobcat, marten, and fisher. However, any otter, bobcat, marten or fisher taken by those under 8 while trapping other species shall be reported as incidental take. The Department recommended changes to some of the State Wildlife and Game Area Trapping Seasons. Lastly, the Department recommended that there be a clarification on the maximum legal trap opening size for body-gripping traps on public and commercial forest lands as follows: six inches as measured from inside the jaw hinges. These recommendations will be presented for action at the June Commission meeting.

Bill Pemble and Fran Heffron, Office of Land and Facilities, presented the new appearance of 2006 Hunting License. All of the separate days of the month will no longer appear across the bottom, the hunter will have to notch the first and second days of the month (appear as 0-3 and then 0-9). Text was also added below "Antler Points" to say for deer and elk. Bill demonstrated how the back of the license can be used for adding a variety of information including the Report All Poaching (RAP) phone number. A statement was added to the online registration form to remind hunters that if they apply online than they must check their results online. They will not receive a mailed postcard.

Bill Moritz presented proposed changes in deer regulations. Before providing the 2006 proposed changes, he summarized some background on deer management. The Department's goal is to manage the deer herd using management practices based on scientific research to: maintain healthy animals and keep the deer population within limits dictated by the carrying capacity of the range and by its effect on native plant communities, agricultural, horticultural, and silvicultural crops and public safety; and maintain an active public information program designed to acquaint the public with the methods of deer management and the conditions needed to maintain a healthy, vigorous herd.

Next, he discussed that biologists use two tools to manage the herd - management of key habitats and regulation setting. Habitat management focuses on restoration, enhancement, and/or protection. Regulations focus on the number of participants, season structure, and number and type of animals that can be taken. Bill presented a historical review of how deer regulations have changed over time.

The following deer recommendations were presented for 2006:

No public or private land antlerless licenses in 14 DMU's and no public land antlerless licenses in 18 DMU's. There would be private and public land antlerless licenses available in 66 DMU's. The Department recommends a 40 acre minimum requirement on private land antlerless licenses in UP and NLP DMU's – a telephone number of the landowner granting permission would be printed on the license; no acreage requirement in DMU's within TB area and entirely within zone 3. The Department also recommended that there be a limit on antlerless licenses: three per person, with only two being used in both the UP and NLP.

Dr. Moritz stated that the Commission will be receiving the recommended license quotas for each DMU and will be presented "For Information Only" in June and Action in July.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Wheatlake met with legislators regarding DNR issues and attended the Deer Work Shop and Listening Session in Marquette on April 22.

Commissioner Garner was master-of-ceremony at Dennis Knickerbocker's retirement party; attended the Office of Land and Facilities' professional development session at the MacMullan Center; attended the Deer Work Shop in Marquette on April 22, and received several calls, letters and e-mails regarding DNR issues.

Commissioner Earley thanked Rodney Stokes and Ron Olson for coming to Saginaw to discuss local recreational issues; and supported staff's recommendations on Quality Deer Management.

Commissioner Madigan led the Marquette Deer Work Shop and listening session held on April 22; received several letters, e-mails and calls regarding DNR matters; and thanked staff for a job well done in the eastern UP.

Commissioner Brown received several letters, e-mails and calls regarding DNR issues.

Chairman Charters attended the Citizens Committee for State Parks meeting in Bay City; has had several meetings with staff and legislators relative to DNR issues; and has received several letters, e-mails and phone calls regarding DNR issues.

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The meeting adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

Approval: _____

Keith J. Charters, Chair

Rebecca A. Humphries, Director